

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 15, 2003

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman:

We are writing to thank you for your efforts during the previous fiscal year to help alleviate the depressed market conditions confronting our nation's farmers and fishers, and to encourage the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expand its efforts to include the purchasing of fresh and frozen Oregon pink shrimp for the National School Lunch Program and other domestic feeding programs.

Oregon's shrimp fishers continue to suffer extreme financial hardships due to adverse economic factors beyond their control. Imported product and favorable ocean conditions have led to an excess supply of large count shrimp, such as Oregon pink shrimp, in the marketplace. The price for the processed product is so low that fishers cannot afford to go fishing. The Department's purchase of Oregon pink shrimp would help alleviate the oversupply situation confronting the fishers, while providing healthy and nutritious seafood to America's school children and needy families.

Oregon pink shrimp are a low cost, nutritious, readily available source of high quality protein. At \$1.90 to \$2.50 per pound for either fresh or frozen cooked, peeled, ready to eat shrimp, the cost of Oregon pink shrimp is competitive with other sources of protein. Fresh product is available from April to October and the frozen product is available year-round with approximately 12 million pounds of shrimp meat harvested last year alone. With 21 grams of protein and only 1 gram of fat in an average 3 ounce, 100 calorie serving of Oregon pink shrimp, this product is a highly nutritious source of protein. Clearly, Oregon fishers and processors are ready and able to meet the nutritional needs of America's school children and others served by domestic feeding programs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the Department's domestic feeding programs meet the dual purpose of serving the nutritional needs of their beneficiaries, and help to boost the economic conditions of farmers and fishers – including Oregon shrimpers – by reducing excess supplies. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Julien Lartigue (202-224-5062) on Sen. Wyden's staff or Betsy McDonnell (202-224-8310) on Sen. Smith's staff.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
US Senator



Gordon H. Smith
US Senator